

On the other hand, a good deal of freedom in
 feeling, and talking is essential for a really
 thinking,
 intelligent life
 and a really intelligent literature; that is
 where the French
 salon and French prose, which owes much
 more than
 ours to the salon, have the better of us. It
 is strange
 how constant through the centuries has
 remained the
 sullen, self-centred aloofness of our race.
 For practical
 purposes, no doubt, for administrative
 work, or for a
 football match, our 'team-spirit' is there;
 but in thought
 or in amusement we remain for the most
 part locked up
 in ourselves. One gasps to read in Froissart,
 so modern
 does it seem, how our fourteenth-century
 countrymen on
 some occasion, Yamusaient tristement selon
 la coutume
 de leur pays'. Was England ever
 'Merrie', or had it
 already ceased to be? A century and a half
 later Jean du
 Bellay writes to the Grand Master, of the
 pending recep-
 tion of Henry VDI: 'Especially I beg you to
 bar from the
 court two kinds of people, those who are
 Imperialists. *.
 and those who have a reputation of being
 mockers and
 waggish fellows; for that is indeed the one
 thing in the
 world most hated by this nation'. Michelet,
 coming to the
 trial of Joan of Arc, bursts out into a sudden
 rage against
 this race whose one ruling passion is its
 gloomy pride. The
Imitatio Christi, he exclaims, has been
 attributed to a
 Frenchman, to a German, to an Italian; but
 never (this

is, in fact, not true) to an Englishman.
Swedenborg puts
English souls in a separate heaven of their
own. Taine
finds the salient thing about us our 'manque
de bonheur*;
and writes elsewhere: 'A ne prendre que les
modernes, on
pourrait dire que, dans chaque Anglais, il y
a quelque-
chose de Byron, de Wordsworth, et de
Carlyle, trois
esprits bien dif&rents et pourtant semblables
en un point
qui est une force et une fiublesse, et que,
faute d'autres
termes, je me risque i nommer
Thypertrophie da moi" \